

Nov. 8, 1900.

**SKETCH of the**

**ASHEVILLE  
FARM  
SCHOOL**

**Under care of Woman's Board of Home  
Missions of the Presbyterian Church**

## LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

of the

Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church,

No. 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

# FARM SCHOOL

## ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA.

### HISTORY.

As early as 1891 an appeal was made for the uplifting of the boys of this region. In June of that year, after hearing an address by Miss Florence Stephenson, of Asheville, a twelve-year-old boy of New Rochelle, N. Y., with heart inflamed by love and sympathy, asked: "To whom shall I send money for that boys' school? I have not much, only two or three dollars, but I want all I have to help start that school." That was the "day of small things," but he gave all he had and the result was according to his desire, for that gift was the foundation of the Asheville Farm School. The girls of the Home-Industrial School unanimously decided to devote their Thanksgiving offering for missions to this fund. Under the Woman's Board, Mission Bands, Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavor, Woman's Societies, Sunday Schools and individuals came to the rescue, and by the blessing of God the fund grew.

Early in the spring of 1898, after careful investigation, Rev. D. Stuart Dodge, D.D., and the late O. D. Eaton, of the Board of Home Missions, together with the late Rev. L. M. Pease and Dr. Lawrence, of Asheville, purchased a 420-acre farm, lying in the beautiful Swannanoa, about nine miles from Ashe-

ville. Who would take charge of such a work? The Lord had already prepared the man for the place. Samuel Jeffrey, of Western Pennsylvania, had completed the agricultural course at Cornell University, and being ready for service, in April, 1892, he went to take charge of a farm school which was as yet without buildings, stock or implements. As speedily as possible matters were adjusted, and the spring plowing, sowing and planting were done. Ground was broken for the school building in July, 1892, but early in the month of August the Board called a halt and the work ceased. The impending panic had come, and the country was in a financial spasm. In October the Board ordered that the work be resumed until the building should be enclosed in the rough, thus securing and protecting the work already done. Financial stringency cannot permanently hinder the work which God approves and blesses. In May, 1894, the workmen were again summoned, and during the summer the building was completed, with the exception of the upper floor. November 21, 1894, the school opened with Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey and Miss Hadden as a teaching force. The Board at first permitted them to take twenty-five boys, and in February, 1895, they were instructed to receive boys according as scholarships should be provided. In March, Miss Williams was added to the teaching force. Thus the Farm School grew through the first year of its existence.

The second year opened with seven commissioned workers and a full dormitory, with accommodations for eighty-eight boys. At the close of the third year a class of bright, strong, Christian young men, the first fruits of the Farm School, was sent out into life, with broader vision, larger purposes, better hopes and stronger courage, because of the training received. The work has grown in every direction, and now there are ten commissioned workers.

## THE PURPOSE.

The dominating purpose of this work is the one which ruled the good Samaritan, viz.: to stoop and lift up the unfortunate and help him to the end that he may help himself and others. Every boy is required to do all he can to help himself, for it is the settled purpose of the school only to supplement means and so to help the boy who gives promise of developing into a useful man. Walter H. Page, a native North Carolinian, shows the need most eloquently and forcibly in his address on the "Forgotten Man." "Here are at least a million of our own people who have been neglected and finally forgotten. While we as a nation have been advancing at a rapid rate in matters social, educational, commercial and industrial, a mass of our own people, among those who so valiantly helped to win our freedom, has disappeared from the van. Because of natural obstructions and environment, they have fallen behind, have stood still, and while languishing for lack of supplies they have been outstripped and forgotten. We have forgotten them. They are ours in a two-fold sense, ours in their fellow-citizenship and ours in their Presbyterian ancestry." The purpose of this work is to remember our forgotten brothers. It seeks to stimulate heart and brain and hand.

## RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

The primary work of the school is the recognition and emphasis of the principle which Christ laid down in the planting of His kingdom, viz.: to teach these boys to seek first in time and importance the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all needful things shall be added.

A goodly proportion of the time is spent in the cultivation of the soul life. At the daily morning

and evening devotions the practical side of Christianity, that is, Christian living, is emphasized by Scripture reading, by counsel and in prayer. The daily systematic Bible study has its devotional feature, each recitation being opened with prayer.

The close contact with the boys gives abundant opportunity for that personal hand-to-hand work which yields so bountifully in the matter of Christian training and growth. Early each Sunday morning the boys carry on their own voluntary prayer-meetings. Later the Sunday-school lesson is taught. In the afternoon, besides silent time, the Christian Endeavor Meetings, Senior and Junior, are held. Under the supervision of the teachers this work is put into the hands of the boys. The closing hour of the day is devoted to regular preaching service. No boy enters the Farm School, to remain however short a time, without having Christ presented to him as a Saviour. One of the boys who completed the course last spring, in writing to me said: "I often think of the Farm School, and when I do my heart goes out in love to it, for it was there I learned to know and love God; this was worth all the rest."

#### SECLULAR EDUCATION.

The classroom work does not reach higher education, but according to the need, is devoted to rudimentary work. The common school branches are taught, such as reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, geography, physical and political; United States history, English literature, physiology, civil government, vocal music and the Bible, which is used as a text-book. One of the most hopeful features of the entire work is the manner in which the boys enter into this week-day study of the Bible. They give their time, interest and energy to this study. There is nothing of skepticism here;

they reverence the Bible, receive it as the word of God, and are ready for the simple, direct and practical application of its teaching. We are led to believe that this regular, systematic Bible work enters largely into the daily conduct of their lives. Literary exercises are conducted at regular intervals in connection with each grade under the direction of a teacher. Many of the boys come to us knowing nothing, and must begin at the very bottom.

### MANUAL TRAINING.

Every boy has daily two hours of industrial work to do, besides what is known as chore work morning and evening. The work on the farm under direction of competent foremen is done by the boys. There is grubbing to be done and clearing the woodland; wood must be cut for the furnace to heat the building by steam; plowing, preparing the soil for the crop, gardening, sowing, planting, cultivating, reaping, gathering; feeding stock, milking, and a score of things which cannot here be mentioned. It must be remembered that these are boys who came to us untrained, whose methods are, for the most part, very crude, and that the results of their labor are not as great as those of experienced farm hands. Under the supervision of the matrons the housework is all done by the boys. Housekeeping for a family of a hundred, where boys are greatly in the majority, is no small undertaking. But the boys make the best of it and the house is well kept; sweeping, dusting, mopping, cleaning lamps, laundry work, preparing vegetables, cooking, baking, setting tables, washing dishes—this gives an idea of the housework. Something of carpenter work has been done by the boys who are mechanically inclined, as opportunity has come in building and repairing.

## MAINTENANCE.

By making an appeal to Christian people it is comparatively easy to secure funds for establishing a plant for benevolent purposes. The necessity for the first cost of buildings and equipments is readily seen, but the need of maintaining the annual support of such a work is not so apparent. Now some mission work is planted with a view to its becoming, in time, self-supporting, and other without any hope of self-support. This mission work can never become self-supporting, from the very nature of the case, therefore, annual scholarships of \$75 each have been established. This means that an individual, a society or band, assumes the support of a particular boy—whom they may learn to know, and from whom they may hear directly or indirectly. Another plan is taking shares of \$75 each. A share is a gift to the support of the whole work of the school.

Most sure of all is the endowment plan, by which permanent scholarships are established. A gift of \$3,000 will endow a scholarship. The income from this amount insures the support annually of one pupil for all time to come. What an opportunity for a paying investment! Your \$3,000 thus invested will for an indefinite number of boys provide for a better life which comes with development of body and mind, and will bring to bear upon their souls the claims of the Son of God whom to know is life eternal. They in turn will wield a better influence, and thus the investment increases with marvelous progression.

## PRESENT NEEDS.

A friend has enlarged the building so that within a very short time sixty additional boys can be received. This means that scholarships of \$75.00 per year must be contributed, else the boys most in need

of the school cannot occupy the places provided.

But the needs are not all on the side of the school. The church, the state, the nation, the world's work have need of these mountain boys, who are from the purest American stock our country affords. They have been kept a conservative force, as it were, and now the Lord in His providence has permitted us to call them out and equip them for efficient service in the Church militant. The course of study in the Farm School, as stated, is not extended. The methods of work and the advancement in study will not help a boy far on his way to a brilliant career in life. In this, our day, leaders are not the crying need. What is most needed is raising to a higher standard of morals, of intelligence, of spiritual life, the rank and file of fallen humanity. Let it not be said of any of us that we passed by the other side when our attention was called to the neighbor, the mountaineer, sore wounded by his circumstances. It is the outstretched, active, helping hand which is endowed with strength. We need the exercise of the grace of giving, and the gift of prayer, as much as these neighbors need our gifts and our prayers. In the highest significance Browning's words true:

"A sick man healed by thee will make thee strong,  
A poor man helped by thee will make thee rich."

Price one cent each, 75 cents per 100.

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